

# **SHOW-ME ROCKHOUNDS**

FEBRUARY 2005 NEWSLETTER

**MEETINGS are held at the WESTPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY each month at 7:00pm. The library is located at 201 Westport Rd. KCMO. There is parking on the side and in the rear of the library. Dues are \$10.00 per family and \$5.00 for individual memberships. Show-Me Rockhounds is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Association of Earth Science Clubs of Greater Kansas City, Inc. and the Mid-West Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Our purpose is to further the study and awareness of the Earth Sciences amongst our membership and the public.**

**OFFICERS:** Marty Mueller President; Vice-President ????  
Sharon Penner, Treasurer Secretary & newsletter Carol Ferguson.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

Welcome to February, I can imagine that most rock hounds view this month with a Rodney Dangerfield like feeling of disrespect. Snow, wet, freeze, and thaw; how can anyone be positive? And here we are, as with many months, set up with good and bad news, yet it is still February. Okay, the bad news is the meeting room is busy until the 23<sup>rd</sup> and that is a Wednesday, in as much as I, like you, are frustrated over our floating meeting dates, I want everyone to know that with the help of Marty Sorensen's persistence, we did get a meeting before the March Gem & Mineral Show plus a meeting before the first field trip of 2005 (Tri State District), and the possibility of locking in our meeting time with, what I feel is a very good deal, space rent of \$10.00 a meeting. Marty Sorensen is the Kansas City Library's head of scheduling, she is from north-east Montana and married into a good Danish family (she laughed at lutfisk). So if she shows up for a meeting to make sure we're not burning down the building, I would appreciate it if everyone would treat her with more respect than a pebble pup. Thank-you.

Our first field trip is to Granby, Missouri, that is part of the Tri State Mineral District, and is near Joplin. This area produced massive amounts of galena and sphalerite for lead and zinc from very shallow, one to two man mining operations that evolved to mega-corporations that saw their end by the 1970's. The trip will be the last weekend of Feb. and while some areas have been collected heavily, we have lately been getting access to mine dumps that have been relatively untouched over the decades.

We have to have our competition, and club cases all but ready to set up for the March show by time we have our meeting. I know Sharon will be watching our bank balance while I want to remind everyone of the fun and challenge of putting together a good case for display. (OVER).....

This hobby grows thru sharing and it isn't just what we can teach them (who is them?) but it is also about what we have learned or even our unanswered questions. To those without a case and yet want to try, set up your display on a 20" by 24" or 24" by 32" foot print and we will either have a spare case or will be able to make you one (for a small fee) so you can set up for the show. Please if you could bring to the meeting: notes, themes, and even photos of your planed cases. We can have a good time sharing ideas. See everyone at the meeting. Martin

## **Calendar of Events:**

**Wed. Feb. 23rd Show Me Rockhound meeting will be at Westport Library @ 7pm. Y'all come now ya hear!**

**Field Trip to Granby, MO Feb. 27. Ted will ahve info at the next meeting...be there!!!!**

**Tues March 15<sup>th</sup> Show Me Rockhound meeting**

**Tues. April 12<sup>th</sup> Show Me Rockhound meeting**

### **Future events:**

- Association of Earth Science Clubs of Kansas City Annual Show March 11-13, .....see the website [www.kcgemshow.org](http://www.kcgemshow.org)
- Rockhound Roundup Deming, New Mexico March 10-13, 2005 (1-505-544-8643)
- Wichita Club Show Wichita, Kansas April 22-24, 2005
- Ellinwood Swap Ellinwood, Kansas May 20-22, 2005
- Park Hills Swap Missouri Mines in Park Hills, MO. 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in June.
- **Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies Show**, 41st Annual Pikes Peak Gem & Mineral Show Hosted by the Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society June 17-19, 2005  
The theme will be "Pikes Peak, A Rockhounds Paradise", featuring Colorado Gems, Minerals and Fossils. **Five days of field trips will follow the show.** Information, 1-719-632-9686 email [csmshow@cs.com](mailto:csmshow@cs.com). Location: Phil Long Expo Center, 1515 Auto Mall Loop, Colorado Springs.

**DUES ARE DUE  
SEND YOUR DUES TO OUR TREASURER:  
SHARON PENNER  
4302 W. 93<sup>RD</sup> TERRACE  
PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS 66207**

Thanks to Martin for sharing this article:

Lapidary deals with working stone, whether you pick up rocks with holes for stringing or onto the precision of faceting gem crystal. In as much as I feel that we don't pick up and string enough pebbles, I want to write a little about choosing material for making cabochons.

To simplify the formation of a good cabochon into two areas seems to be dramatic yet when art is looked at, there is a balance between material and aesthetics. For a good cabochon, the material has to fulfill the demands of the wear and tear of use, it needs to be able to take and hold a finish, plus there is a ratio dealing with the size to thickness. The last issue can have a carry over into the aesthetics of a piece; other aspects of the aesthetics can include color and pattern.

Any rock or mineral chosen needs to be hard enough to take and hold a polish yet even some rocks that are hard may not have an interior structure that will allow an easy or successful polish. Quartz is by far the most popular with agate and jasper as the favorite members. Agates, in my experience, have always taken a good polish, this is because of the way agates form. Agates are semi-transparent cryptocrystalline quartz form called chalcedony and has rod to fibrous structure. Jaspers are also cryptocrystalline but they have a granular structure and are opaque.

Jaspers being granular does result some of them not able to take a polish readily. I have read on how to judge if a jasper will not take a polish, is to find or make a broken surface and if it looks sugary then it will not polish. In my own working with jasper, I have found out that the sugary structure, if fine, will take a polish and yes a coarse sugary texture is difficult to polish because of plucking and pitting. I do wonder if one would be able to use a vibrating polisher to get a good finish on a rough cabochon with out altering the shape too much.

Both agate and jasper with their variations can provide an artistic source of material for everyone without being kitschy even for the highest skilled craftsperson. Their hardness holds a good polish while the stones take a beating making them top choice for rings, bracelets, and belt buckles. Those three uses are subject to a great amount of contact, four pieces of jewelry that receive better protection are necklaces or bolo ties, pins or brooches, ear rings, and hat pins. These areas allow the use of softer material that catch your eye; such as Picasso Stone, from Utah, or Missouri Dreamstone, from Mark & Rita Hadley of Annapolis, Missouri.

Picasso Stone has a Mohs hardness of 4, maybe 5 noticeably softer than quartz's hardness of 7, making it easier to work. Missouri Dreamstone is reported to be a hydrothermal altered dolomite with a hardness of 5. Turquoise has a hardness of 5 to 6, that is for natural turquoise, while over the last decade, epoxy or resin stabilized chalk turquoise, has been prepared by the ton for the jewelry maker. It is softer, smells like plastic burning when it is being worked, but deepened color will not shift due to normal skin contact.

Having your material ready to cut into slabs or on a shopping list as precut slabs; I want you to think about the size and shape necessary for your design. Basically the larger the cabochon the thicker it needs to be to have a well proportioned dome, so if you cut or buy a thin slab and want a larger cabochon you will have a flat face that may prove to be very difficult to wheel polish unless you can first use a flat lap to grind and polish saw scars and scratches off before forming the low dome. One of the most common larger cabochons is 30mm by 40mm, often used for belt buckles, bolo ties, and some brooches, should start out as thick as 10mm, definitely no thinner than 7mm.

If you do get stuck with a slab that is too thin, you might be able to epoxy another piece to its back. The backing can be ground down to achieve the proper thickness before forming the dome. If you are making a monumental cabochon you might think of using the grind wheels to hollow out the back to lower the weight of it, or if the slab is too thick for the desired cabochon, balance your decision on your skill to either grind the back down or to grind the dome until you get the proper proportions.

The rocks you pick have an effect on the size of a cabochon beyond the constraints of its physical hardness. Patterns in the rock have a visual range where they will benefit a jewelry design, large patterns such as found with Picasso Stone and picture jaspers seldom work in cabochons smaller than 20mm across because the pattern can get lost and small patterns such as Missouri Dreamstone and crazy lace agate can be too busy so that for a cabochon over 30mm become turbulent.

Turquoise and other monochromatic stones work well at 10mm; their color can be overwhelming if used in pieces larger than 20mm. Natural turquoise is often used much larger than 20mm where the cabochon is baroque with its shape and possible matrix adding visual balance to offset the strength of the color; stabilized turquoise is rarely used as a baroque and like reconstituted turquoise is used for its color.

All of these measurements I have given here are to get people to look for design balance and uses the cabochon as the primary design element. The loss of a large pattern because of being used for a too small cabochon is just that, lost. I am trying to remember any large pattern that had shown anything more than a line or a color change when utilized in a small piece, it is not a good use of picture jasper to cut it down to exploit a single line when you can find simple banded rock to provide the line.

Small pattern decoration in cabochons invites an inspection that borders on intimacy while the aficionado stares at the all but too small world when the pattern is used in a large cabochon; a cabochon large enough to present the crazy lace agate or Missouri Dreamstone as its own microcosm begging for exploration. So as someone's nose starts hovering six inches from your chest as to get a good look at the cabochon in your necklace, remember you're the one who made the cabochon large enough to serve as a doorway to a very small and interesting place to visit.

The aesthetics of design are not rigid, yet if you always try to push the envelope with design, you may find your cabochons almost unwearable. Good luck on pleasing yourself.